

Mr. DREIER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Speaker, and I would be happy to further yield to my friend, I would say that we have been going through the appropriations process. We are in the minority. There is a new majority. A promise was made to the American people that work on the appropriations process would be completed by the July 4th break. I am just a little confused here as to how it is that we got to this point.

This is now an amendment to the rule that is being propounded, and I would just like to say that I think by virtue of doing this we are simply, Mr. Speaker, underscoring the fact that the work has not been completed. If a finger of blame is being pointed, I guess at our side, we have delayed the process of completing the appropriations work, all I am saying, Mr. Speaker, is that this was a commitment that was made at the beginning of the 110th Congress. And obviously, with the explanation just provided by my friend from Sacramento, this has not happened.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield to my friend, Mr. OBEY.

Mr. OBEY. Thank you for yielding.

I was in my office and I heard you make the assertion that a "promise" had been made to finish all of the appropriations bills by July 4.

I am the chairman of the committee. I certainly made no promise. We indicated that it was our plan and our intent. But I would point out we have had several hundred amendments offered by Members of the minority party. We have spent approximately twice as much time debating each of the bills the last 3 weeks than was the case a year ago, despite the agreement between the two leaderships that there would be every effort made to try to handle these bills in a timetable that was consistent with last year's activities.

And so I simply want to make quite clear that there was no "promise." And even if there had been, which there was not, the majority cannot be held accountable for the fact that your Members introduced 188 amendments to a single bill. One Member introduces 188 amendments to a single bill which is simply filibustering by amendment.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I thank the distinguished Chair of the Appropriations Committee for his explanation.

I will say, however, what we have done is we have followed the standard appropriations process. In fact, as we look at the rules that have been passed out so far through the appropriations process, in the last Congress, we made in order every single amendment that was proposed to the Legislative Branch Appropriations bill, and as the gentleman knows, only three of 23 amendments that were submitted to the Rules Committee when it came to the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee bill were made in order which did in fact limit the debate.

All I would say, Mr. Speaker, is my friend from Sacramento has come for-

ward and said she is going to offer an amendment to the rule. I am concerned about it, the fact that it was not included in the rule and it has just come to our attention.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. Mr. Speaker, let me simply point out, Mr. Speaker, that in addition to the fact that we have effectively endured filibuster by amendment by the minority for the past 3 weeks, in addition to that fact, we have two other practical facts to face.

When we took over this Congress, we had to deal with last year's budget because the folks who controlled the Congress last time just didn't happen to get around to passing the appropriations bills last time. So we had to spend the first month of this session doing the work that they left over from the last session. They had passed not a single portion of the domestic part of the budget. They had not passed a single domestic appropriation bill. So first we had to run that cleanup brigade.

Then we had to deal with the fact that in order to hide the full cost of the war, the President declined to request funding for the Iraqi war in the regular defense bill which was supposed to be finished last year. So we had to take the next 3½ months to clean up that mess left over from last year. So I would say it is really the pot calling the kettle black to somehow suggest that the majority party has failed in its responsibility because it has not met a so-called mythical promise.

We laid out what the plan was, and given the fact that the first 4 months of this session was essentially spent cleaning up their mess, I think we have done pretty well.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would say to my very good friend from Wisconsin, welcome to the challenge of governing, as he knows very, very well.

The fact of the matter is there was, in fact, at the beginning of this Congress, a statement made. And what has been proposed by my colleague from Sacramento is an amendment to the rule to deal with the Budget Act. All of a sudden, we are going to just waive the responsibility here to deal with this question, and I just think that the procedure around which we are now taking this action on this amendment underscores that our colleagues are having a little bit of difficulty governing.

Let me just say that I am opposed to this rule for a number of reasons. I would like to restate the concern that I raised earlier.

I had a chance to speak with our colleague from New York, the distinguished Chair, of the Ways and Means Committee, Mr. RANGEL. I told him of a letter that was sent to the Rules

Committee from Mr. McCRERY which raised concern over the fact that there are people out there who are completely abrogating their responsibility to pay their fair share of taxes. They are not complying with the law. And in September of 2006, private collection agencies were enlisted by the Federal Government to begin the collection of taxes from deadbeats who are not paying their taxes.

Mr. Speaker, 40 other States, 40 other States have enlisted private collection agencies, and they have been successful, and at the Federal level, we have, as of March of this year, seen \$19.47 million collected so far, and the projection is that under these private collection agencies in the next decade, we will see between \$1.5 billion and \$2.2 billion in taxes that are owed to the Federal Government paid.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, if we pass this rule, we are undermining the ability of the Ways and Means Committee to take on its responsibility for this issue. So I will urge my colleagues to vote "no" on this rule so, in fact, we will have an opportunity to do the right thing when it comes to this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a comment on the Members' COLA once again, that the Members' COLA was calculated by a predetermined automatic formula. This legislation does not address Members' COLA. Changes to Members' COLA formula should be addressed in authorizing legislation from the Committee on House Administration.

Mr. Speaker, the American people expect and deserve the best services their government can offer and their tax dollars pay for. This \$21.4 billion bipartisan bill provides significant support to our small businesses, helps guarantee our citizens' right to vote, and works to close the tax gap. It is a good bill. I believe through simple measures such as these, we can restore our citizens' faith that the government can, and is, working for them again.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. MATSUI

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I have an amendment to the rule at the desk.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Ms. MATSUI:

At the end of the resolution add the following new section:

SEC. \_\_\_\_\_. It shall be in order, any rule of the House to the contrary notwithstanding, to consider concurrent resolutions providing for the adjournment of the House and Senate during the month of July.

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, this amendment adds a new section to the rule that allows the House to consider concurrent resolutions providing for the adjournment of the House and Senate during the month of July.

I urge a "yes" vote on the rule and the previous question.